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LETTER DATED 26 MARCH 1992 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SOMALIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to you and to the members of the Security Council for unanimously adopting resolution 746 (1992), the recommendations of which carry all the necessary elements for resolving my country's problem. I also wish to commend the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General in response to resolution 733 (1992) and in cooperation with the regional and intergovernmental organizations. The Secretary-General's report (S/23693) has brought to light a number of important issues that characterize the situation as "... extraordinarily complex and has so far eluded conventional solutions". I consider that the Secretary-General's observations have therefore been most representative of the prevailing reality, his initiatives most commendable and his proposals most relevant.

I also fully subscribe to the view clearly carried in the report that "Somalia ... presents a special challenge to the international community, and to the Security Council in particular". I therefore find myself obliged to share with the Council my sincere views regarding some aspects of this challenge, as I understand them, and to draw on their implications for an effective programme of assistance. I sincerely hope that the attached paragraphs will help the Council to set, in the light of them, some parameters for action within the context of resolution 746 (1992).

I would therefore be grateful if the attached document was circulated in its entirety as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ms. Fatun Mohamed HASSAN
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

A comprehensive approach to resolving the Somali crisis: a process perspective

The current situation of the Somali conflict has been very well described in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the Secretary-General's report. a/ A cease-fire arrangement has been and still remains a logical first step to bring to an end the senseless loss of life in Mogadiscio. The cease-fire should not however be a prerequisite for providing humanitarian assistance to the needy in Mogadiscio. To begin with, any cease-fire agreement signed between the two protagonists in Mogadiscio will remain fragile and runs the risk of being broken at any time, since its terms do not bind all the critical actors in the reality. Those armed groups that are not under the control of either protagonist might rekindle violence at any time. On the other hand, one or another hostile neighbouring faction, not bound by the terms of the cease-fire agreement, might choose to wage a war on one or both of the Mogadiscio factions. Furthermore, it has been established beyond doubt that human suffering due to famine and food shortages transcend the boundaries of Mogadiscio and its immediate surroundings. Such a reality would dictate therefore that a massive-scale humanitarian and relief assistance be put together to reach the affected population nationwide, regardless of the success of cease-fire arrangements in Mogadiscio or elsewhere. It must be stressed, however, that inbuilt mechanisms should be designed to ensure the safety of relief officials.

In any case, the Mogadiscio cease-fire will be short-lived unless the cause of the conflict is removed. The Secretary-General's report has clearly established that "the conflict arose because General Aidid did not recognize Mr. Mohamed as Interim President". b/ Of course Mr. Mohamed's claim to the presidency is based on the Djibouti Accords. c/ It should however be understood that General Aidid's wing of the United Somali Congress (USC) is not the only entity that rejects the Djibouti Accords. It should be noted also that only some of the existing clan parties or movements had participated in the Djibouti-held national reconciliation conference of July 1991. The likelihood of this point of conflict being resolved between the two warring factions in Mogadiscio through bilateral negotiations between themselves is growing more and more futile and remote. Indeed, it would take an assembly representing all the Somali clans to attain a durable cease-fire arrangement, even between the warring factions in Mogadiscio, because that is what it takes to remove the cause of the conflict in Mogadiscio.

The experience of the Djibouti conference remains a case for reference if any future conference is to succeed. Some relevant aspects of this experience must be committed to memory. Firstly, in addition to the Somali National Movement (SNM), which had declined an invitation to participate, some other factions were somehow disallowed to participate despite their indication of interest in attending. Secondly, even in the case of those factions that did participate, questions relating to legitimacy of representation and mandate of

their delegations later arose from within the rank and file of their own clans or factions. USC, to which both Mr. Mohamed and General Aidid belong, is only an example. But it is certainly not the only one. In some other groups, divisions of this nature had led to splits that have resulted in the formation of new groups or alliances with new names and acronyms, thus complicating matters much more.

So far, I have been trying to establish the view that the cease-fire, humanitarian assistance and national reconciliation should all merit equal emphasis as three essential elements of a comprehensive United Nations political, security and humanitarian/relief assistance programme to bring the protracted Somali crisis to an end. I have already discussed two of the elements - the cease-fire and humanitarian assistance. Before turning to the point of national reconciliation as the last of the three elements, I should like to touch on some aspects of the challenge that the situation poses to the efforts of the international community as I see them today.

The first aspect of this challenge relates to perceptions about present-day Somalia. It must by now have been realized by all that Somalia comprises enclaves of land controlled by the clans traditionally inhabiting them. It follows logically that mistrust and suspicious behaviour, if not animosity, characterize the relationships between these clans. The international community should therefore ensure that each segment or entity, so established as claiming control over its land and affairs, is reached and dealt with separately until such time that the unity of the Somali nation is restored. Humanitarian assistance is a case in point in this regard. It is therefore essential that the technical team dispatched by the Secretary-General should not only visit Mogadiscio, Berbera and Kismayo, but should also perform similar exercises in many more seaports including Hobio, Bossaso, Laskoreh, Mait and Zeila, all of which are access ports to some clans that it would be difficult to reach from other ports. The possibility of using Djibouti as the access port for the extreme north-west of Somalia should also be duly considered. This involves the minimum that needs to be done to ensure the equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance.

The second aspect of the challenge relates to the issue of fragmented sovereignty. Somalia symbolizes the worst case ever of constitutional, institutional, political, economic and geographic disintegration. All efforts to reinstitute its statehood must therefore be preceded by a realization and an acceptance of its disintegration. This entails recognizing the existence of a multitude of factions, clans or entities and the boundaries of such enclaves, as well as identifying their leaderships (traditional, political and armed militia). To ensure fairness of representation and to demonstrate impartiality in facilitating peace, unity and stability, all the main towns of these factions, clans and movements must be visited and their leaderships met.

The third aspect of the challenge relates to establishing the authenticity of delegations to any future conference. Given that most clans have three kinds of leadership (traditional, political and military) and given that the clan or faction is sometimes notably divided on some of the issues of

concern, it becomes imperative that mechanisms be thought out to establish the authenticity of faction delegations to any future conference. For example, a delegation could in some cases be accredited by the political wing, some times by the militia wing and occasionally by the traditional leadership. There seems to be a need for some form of uniformity in this respect.

These aspects of the challenge surely present themselves as constraints to the international political will and support to help to resolve the Somali dilemma. The fact remains that the shortest cut for tackling this colossal task involves carefully delineating all the critical steps in a long and laborious process and adopting a realistic time-frame. Hence, any hastened or cursory conference might abort like its predecessor.

In this connection, I must share with you a glimpse of a positive development in the situation of which I have been informed of late. While the war was raging in Mogadiscio and tensions remained notably high in some places perceived as important like Berbera and Kismayo, peace and tranquillity have been on the increase in areas wtihin clan enclaves and in many border areas between them. If evidence of this is established, it would be safe to consider it as the start of a positive process, at least as far as peace is concerned. I am inclined to suggest that this process be nurtured and encouraged as an avenue towards peace and reconciliation by initially working with the traditional leadership. Given this scenario, I wish to suggest the following three-phase reconciliation process.

Phase I

This first phase would involve the convening of a congress of clan chiefs for concluding peace talks, signing a comprehensive cease-fire and ratifying the convention for national reconciliation. Such a congress, representing the traditional clan leadership, could also help to establish the authenticity of the respective delegations to a second phase.

Phase II

In the second phase, a national reconciliation conference would be held in some convenient venue as ratified by the council of traditional leaders, represented by delegations whose authenticity would have been established beyond doubt to discuss and conclude an interim arrangement that would be passed by the council of traditional leaders in a third phase.

Phase III

The third phase would involve a second round of the congress of traditional leaders (a) to pass the interim arrangement worked out in the second phase, including the mandate of the interim Government to be formed later; and (b) to enact a decree that confers powers on an appointed interim head of State.

In conclusion, it will require sufficient concern, adequate involvement and unique competence on the part of the international community to resolve the Somali crisis. I am sure that sufficient concern has already been manifested as indicated by the two resolutions already adopted on the question by the Security Council. The time allocated and the scale of resources deployed will determine the degree of involvement envisaged. But, only a full understanding of the complexity of the situation and a full appreciation of its uniqueness can determine the required competence, without which it will continue to elude conventional solutions. Finally, success will depend on the perspective and the process adopted to tackle the issues involved.

Notes

a/ S/23693.

b/ Ibid., para. 75.

c/ A/46/257 and A/46/319.